

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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P R 291100Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7816
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NY
USICA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SOPN, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA INTENSIFIES CRITICISM OF EGYPT IN FACE OF
CALLS FOR AN ARAB SUMMIT

1. SUMMARY. WHILE CRITICISM OF SADAT STANDARD FARE IN
DAMASCUS SINCE HIS JERUSALEM VISIT, SYRIAN MEDIA APRIL
27-28 APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO INTENSIFY
AND HIGHLIGHT ANTI-SADAT THEMES. THESE ATTACKS LAUNCHED
FROM SEVERAL DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS BUT TIMING SUGGESTS
THAT SYRIA REPLYING TO VARIOUS ENTREATIES MADE RECENTLY
BY JORDANIAN AND KUWAITI ENVOYS TO ATTEND ARAB SUMMIT
CONFERENCE AIMED AT RECONCILING SADAT AND HIS SUPPORTERS
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WITH "STEADFASTNESS FRONT" STATES. END SUMMARY.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. TWO OUT OF THREE DAMASCUS
DAILIES ON BOTH DAYS HEADLINED STORIES ATTACKING SADAT
AND CURRENT EGYPTIAN POLICIES. THUS, TISHRIIN APRIL 27
HEADLINED: "NO SUMMIT CONFERENCE WITH SADAT'S POLICY OF CAPIT-
ULATION...REJECTION OF ANY EFFORT FOR RESCUING SADAT'S

REGIME FROM ITS CURRENT DILEMMA." ON FRIDAY APRIL 28
AL-BAATH BANNERED: "SADAT'S CAMPAIGN OF TERROR REACHES
EGYPTIAN PEOPLE'S COUNCIL. FORFEITURE OF RIGHTS BY ANY
CITIZEN WHO DARES OBJECT TO SADAT'S POLICY."

3. TISHRIIN ARTICLE OUTLINES SYRIA'S CURRENT POSITION
TOWARDS CALLS FOR CONVENING AN ARAB SUMMIT. NOTING THAT
SUCH ATTEMPTS WERE UNDER WAY, ARTICLE ASSERTS EFFORTS TO
INCLUDE "STEADFASTNESS" PARTIES HAD FAILED. IT CLAIMS
THAT BOTH BOUMEDIENNE AND THE PLO ARE REJECTING ATTEMPTS
TO NEUTRALIZE THEIR OPPOSITION TO SADAT'S POLICIES. ARTICLE
STATES THAT STEADFASTNESS STATES DO NOT REJECT IN PRINCIPLE
THE IDEA OF HOLDING A SUMMIT BUT INSIST THAT ANY SUCH
CONFERENCE MUST NOT SERVE "TO COVER UP THE CAPITULATION
OF SADAT'S REGIME OR TO GIVE ITS BLESSING TO WHAT HE HAS
DONE." IT DECLARES THAT SYRIA, IN PARTICULAR, SEES NO
POSSIBILITY OF ATTENDING SUCH ARAB MEETINGS "SO LONG AS
THE ROAD BETWEEN CAIRO AND TEL AVIV REMAINS OPEN AND THE
ROAD BETWEEN CAIRO AND ANTI-CAPITULATION ARABS REMAINS
CLOSED." RATHER SUCH A SUMMIT MUST BE DEVOTED TO ENDING
EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONTACTS AND FORCING SADAT TO ANNOUNCE
THE FAILURE OF HIS POLICY AND THE RETURN OF EGYPT TO
ITS PAN-ARAB ROLE. IT CALLS FOR THE ARABS TO STRUGGLE
ON THE BASIS OF THE RABAT AND ALGIERS RESOLUTIONS. AN
EDITORIAL THE FOLLOWING DAY IN AL-BAATH IS REMINISCENT
OF THE ANTI-SADAT INVECTIVE FOUND IN THE SYRIAN PRESS FOR
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WEEKS AFTER SADAT'S TRIP. ENTITLED: "THE FIRST REQUIRE-
MENT IS TO BRING DOWN THE SADAT REGIME", IT ALLEGES THAT
THE EGYPTIAN REGIME IS IMPLEMENTING AN AMERICAN-ZIONIST
PLOT DIRECTED AGAINST THE ARAB NATION. IT ACCUSES EGYPT
OF TRYING TO PROVE ITS GOOD WILL TOWARD THE US BY DECLARING
ITS FULL READINESS TO CARRY OUT ANY TASK AMERICAN MIGHT
ASSIGN IT IN BOTH THE ARAB AND AFRICAN REGIONS. IT
ASSERTS THAT AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE ARABS ARE
REQUIRED TO TAKE PROMPT ACTION TO "BRING DOWN" THE REGIME
AND TO RETURN EGYPT TO ITS NATURAL ROLE.

5. A NUMBER OF ARTICLES FOCUS ON EGYPT'S DETERIORATING
ECONOMY AND ALLEGE THAT THE WORKERS ARE SUFFERING THE
LOSS OF THEIR RIGHTS WON DURING THE NASSER ERA. LEAD
ARTICLE IN TISHRIIN APRIL 28 QUOTES HERALD TRIBUNE OF
APRIL 25 IN WHICH AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST ALLEGEDLY WROTE
THAT INCREASING PRICES WERE CAUSING A RETURN TO THE
CONDITIONS WHICH SPARKED THE JANUARY 1977 RIOTS. IT ALSO
QUOTES THE ALGERIAN DAILY AL SHAAB WHICH CRITICIZED
EGYPT ATTEMPTS TO ISOLATE EGYPT FROM THE ARAB NATIONALIST
MOVEMENT BY SUCH DEVICES AS CHANGING ITS FLAG AND
ANTIONAL ANTHEM. IT NOTES THAT THE ALGERIAN PAPER

CALLED UPON THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE "TO EXPLODE LIKE A VOLCANO IN ORDER TO RESTORE TO EGYPT ITS PROGRESSIVE FACE." ON THE SAME DAY AL-THAWRA CLAIMED THAT SADAT'S REGIME WAS "TRYING TO COVER UP THE GRAVE DETERIORATION OF THE (ECONOMIC) SITUATION THROUGH CAMPAIGNS OF REPRESSION AND ARRESTS AGAINST WORKERS, STUDENTS, AND THE MASSES WHO OPPOSE ITS CAPITULATIONIST APPROACH."

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6. COMMENT. THE SUDDEN INTENSITY OF ANTI-EGYPTIAN PROPAGANDA HERE SUGGESTS THAT SYRIA WISHES TO SIGNAL THAT FOR THE PRESENT IT IS UNWILLING TO CONSIDER ATTENDING ANY SUMMIT CONFERENCE AT WHICH SADAT IS PRESENT. THE SYRIANS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PERHAPS, ENCOURAGED BY THE CURRENT IMPASSE IN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS PROBABLY FEEL THEY CAN GET BETTER TERMS BY WAITING. MOREOVER, THERE WAS ONE EDITORIAL THIS WEEK WHICH AGAIN RAISED THE CHARGE THAT WHILE THE CONFRONTATION STATES SUCH AS SYRIA BORE THE BURDEN OF FIGHTING FOR THE ARAB CAUSE, OTHER STATES (READ SAUDI ARABIA) PROFITED FROM THEIR SACRIFICES. THIS WAS LAST HEARD WHERE THE SYRIANS FELT THE SAUDIS WERE NOT FULFILLING THEIR AID COMMITMENTS TO SYRIA. PELLETREAU

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